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Report of the Economic and Social Council

United Nations Population Award

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General has the honour to transmit to the members of the General Assembly the report of the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund on the United Nations Population Award, established by the Assembly in its resolution 36/201 of 17 December 1981. The report, which covers the year 2000, was prepared in accordance with Economic and Social Council decision 1982/112 of 26 April 1982.

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Report on the United Nations Population Award (2000)

I. Introduction

1. On 17 December 1981, by its resolution 36/201, the General Assembly established the United Nations Population Award. The Award is presented annually to an individual or individuals, to an institution or institutions or to any combination thereof for the most outstanding contribution to increasing awareness of population questions or to finding solutions to them.

2. The laureate is selected by the Committee for the United Nations Population Award, which is composed of representatives of 10 States Members of the United Nations elected by the Economic and Social Council for a period of three years.

3. In 1997-1998, the Economic and Social Council selected the following 10 countries to serve on the Committee for a period of three years beginning in January 1998: Burundi, Cape Verde, El Salvador, Grenada, Guatemala, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Lesotho, Netherlands, Romania and Thailand. The Secretary-General and the Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) serve as ex officio members. The Executive Director also acts as Secretary of the Committee. The Award consists of a diploma, a gold medal and a monetary prize.

4. The Economic and Social Council is currently in the process of selecting 10 countries to serve in the Committee for a three-year term beginning in January 2001.

5. On 5 December 1986, by its decision 41/445, the General Assembly amended article 2, paragraph 1, of the regulations governing the Award (resolution 36/201, annex), so that an individual and an institution could share the Award.

6. On 26 May 1987, by its decision 1987/129, the Economic and Social Council amended the rules of procedure of the Committee for the Population Award accordingly.

7. On 22 February 2000, the Committee re-elected Jose Luis Barbosa Leao Monteiro (Cape Verde) as Chairman.

II. The 2000 United Nations Population Award

8. A total of 32 nominations were received for the 2000 United Nations Population Award from qualified nominators. Of these, 18 were for the individual category and 14 for the institutional category. In March 2000, within the mandate given to it by the General Assembly, and after a thorough review of the nominations, the Committee selected Professor Ismail Awadallah Sallam in the individual category and the Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar (Mexfam) in the institutional category as the laureates for 2000.

9. Professor Sallam was selected for his extensive contributions to the field of population, especially from the biomedical perspective. An outstanding feature of his career has been his long-term interest in preventive health care and making basic health care available to the poor and under-served populations of Egypt. He recognized the public health ramifications of an overly medicalized system and has always supported community-based efforts and reaching the poor. He has actively assisted in family planning initiatives through his activities in the Health Committee

of the National Democratic Party, which involved helping mothers and children by providing preventive and curative "basic needs" packages of services. His official involvement has been from 1996 only, but his actual involvement in the health issues of Egypt has extended over a long period of time.

10. The Fundación Mexicana para la Planeación Familiar (Mexfam) was selected as an innovator and leader of Mexican civil society in the fields of family planning and sexual and reproductive health. Mexfam participated regularly in the council that directed the creation of Mexico's General Law of Population (1974) that officially introduced family planning into public health programmes. One of its new initiatives is in the area of a comprehensive programme for adolescent sexual health incorporating elements of peer training, community capacity-building, the development of age-appropriate health education materials and school-based workshops. The strategy is being widely used in other Latin American countries also. The institution is one of the leading non-governmental organizations in the area of education and medical services in sexual health for adolescents and youth.

11. The meetings of the Committee during the course of the year addressed the question of possible changes to the nomination process and the Award ceremony. The Committee agreed to recommend to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session the following amendments to the regulations governing the Award:

(a) Article 2, paragraph 3, which reads:

"3. The recipient or recipients of the Award shall be announced by the beginning of March each year, and the Award shall be presented by the Secretary-General in the middle of June",

would be amended to read:

"3. The recipient or recipients of the Award shall be announced not later than the end of March each year, and the Award shall be presented by the Secretary-General not later than the end of June each year";

(b) Article 3, paragraph 1, which reads:

"1. All financial resources related to the Award shall be composed of the voluntary contributions made by Member States specifically for the Award",

would be amended to read:

"1. All financial resources related to the Award shall be composed of the voluntary contributions made by Member States and any other sources specifically for the Award";

(c) Article 5, paragraph 2, which reads:

"2. Nominations shall reach the Secretary-General not later than 31 December of the year prior to the year for which nominations are to be considered",

would be amended to read:

"2. Nominations shall reach the Secretary-General not later than 1 November of the year prior to the year for which nominations are to be considered".

12. The Committee decided to recommend to the General Assembly that the role and functions of the honorary members could be further discussed with a view to

strengthening their contribution to the Population Award process without imposing any additional financial burden on the available resources.

III. Financial matters

13. As at 1 January 1999, the Trust Fund had a total of $746,751. Interest income in 1999 was $57,742. Expenditures in 1999, including the prizes, totalled $43,635. The closing balance as at 31 December 1999 was $760,858.